
Family Policy Council and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Memorandum of Understanding - April 1, 2011 through December 15, 2011

FINAL REPORT



Photo Courtesy of Otavio Lima, 2012

February 23, 2012

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Executive Summary

From mid-April through mid-December, 2011, the Family Policy Council (FPC) provided to the Washington State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) three types of services in 24 counties and 8 Tribes. This service area has 110,149 people with disabilities who are not employed but believe they could work, plus 118,297 individuals who are at-risk of losing employment due to disability-related interruptions in ability to participate in usual daily activities – a total of 228,446 people, which is just shy of ¾ of such people in the state of Washington. The services were provided in partnership with thirty-two of the FPC's local affiliates, Community Public Health and Safety Networks (Community Networks), which are located throughout the state. The three types of services provided were client services, outreach and education, and data collection and analysis for needs assessment and planning, strategic partnership development, and development of innovative approaches to achieve DVR goals. The work was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

Employment is a vital link to improving quality of life and satisfaction for all people in Washington, yet people with disabilities experience disproportionate barriers to employment. Those barriers can be reduced or eliminated with skill building, access to relevant tools and supports, and a supportive community that opens doors and expands the human connections that are important in job search and retention. Two populations, young people transitioning from school to adult life and work, and parents, have major challenges obtaining and retaining jobs, especially in this economy. The work of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) focused on the needs and strengths of these two populations, offering tailored help to them and to the people in their communities who are interested in helping them become successful at work.

Community Networks and their subcontractors worked with an estimated 625 DVR- eligible youth and adults. This number is an estimate because all of the people who participated in activities did not self-identify as DVR-eligible or as DVR current customers. However, Community Networks targeted their outreach to DVR-eligible populations and their families and friends, and asked that referring entities invite people to participate in activities based on criteria that DVR uses to assess eligibility. Over 220 young adults were referred to DVR, plus over 45 individuals became new DVR customers as a result of this MOU. Community Networks hosted skill building events for people with disabilities and their peers. *Over 60 DVR customers, 150 potential employers, and 1,300 participants attended these events.*

The Community Networks worked with over 150 businesses and other employers, emphasizing potential DVR business partners with work opportunities requiring the following skills: Accounting, Auto Repair, Chef/Culinary, Clerical/Office Management, Computer Programming, Counseling, Doctor, Engineering, Entrepreneur, Event Planning, Environmental Science, Financial Planning, Fine Arts, Firefighting, Graphic Artist, Lawyer, Military, Non-Profit Service, Nurse, Real Estate, Teacher, and Video Game Production.

Outreach to employers was extensive and varied from working with one employer at a time, to work through chambers of commerce or other business associations, to invitation-only events. At just one of five of the events hosted by Community Networks, 12 employers attended from a variety of industries including retail, manufacturing, warehouse and logistics, colleges, and forestry. This event provided a platform for young adults to speak directly with leading business professionals to discuss industry-specific employment expectations in an effort to increase their competitiveness in their respective fields of interest.

The Community Networks addressed barriers to employment that were identified by DVR-eligible youth and adults, DVR professionals, and employers. For example, some communities identified lack of access to public transportation as a major barrier to employment. Solutions included blending funds from other sources to fund bus passes for internships (East King County Community Network) and convening managers of volunteer and special transportation systems to forge agreements about how empty seats in these systems could be used by people with disabilities without additional costs to those systems (Cowlitz County Community Network). Another example of removing barriers to employment is a Community Network in King County that forged an agreement with a local charity to provide essential business clothing for young adults to wear for interviews and work with companies and agencies that require professional attire. The fact that local Community Networks are composed of residents and professionals from many neighborhoods and many disciplines was extremely valuable – relationships already exist that allow Community Network members and staff to rapidly reach to potential partners to help solve problems.

The FPC and Community Networks completed a wide range of activities with DVR-eligible people and their friends and families, employers, service providers and community leaders. These activities increased awareness and understanding of DVR – its services, customers, business partnerships, and role in local communities. These activities also improved social/emotional support and work-related networking opportunities for DVR-eligible individuals. Local community relationships were built that will help DVR do its work in the future. Data analyses conducted by FPC revealed important information about the relationship between Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), disability and employment for work-age adults in Washington. These analyses are reported in a separate report, and will be helpful to DVR in informing needs assessment and planning, strategic partnership development, and development of innovative approaches.

Progress on Outcomes and Milestones

	<i>Progress or Completion Phase 1</i>	<i>Progress or Completion Phase 2</i>	<i>Opportunity or Challenge - Comment</i>
OUTCOME 1 Training Sessions for Community Network staff and board members	<i>Complete</i>	<i>Complete</i>	<p><i>Initially we held two trainings. The first was on May 12th, 10am-4pm in Richland. This training included 16 participants representing 8 Community Networks, including FPC & DVR Staff. The second training was on May 16th, 10am-4pm in Lakewood. 37 participants attended representing 18 Community Networks, and included university and community partners, and FPC & DVR Staff.</i></p> <p><i>There was so much excitement and interest that we added a third training session to accommodate people from additional Community Networks on June 23rd, 9am-3pm in Olympia. This event consisted of 15 participants representing 9 Community Networks, consultants, and FPC & DVR Staff.</i></p>
Milestone 1-a Training in Eastern WA	<i>Complete</i>	<i>NA</i>	
Milestone 1-b Training in Western WA	<i>Complete</i>	<i>NA</i>	
Additional Trainings	<i>NA</i>	<i>Complete</i>	
OUTCOME 2 28 Community Networks Commitment to Participate	<i>32 Engaged with training and initial interviews and feasibility inquiry.</i>	<i>28 Completed work conducted throughout the seven month period of the MOU.</i>	<p><i>28 Community Networks completed the first training offered by the FPC and made a commitment to participate. The number of Community Networks receiving training and expressing interest in this work increased throughout the partnership to a high of 32 Community Networks. All 32 Community Networks received training. However some Networks were not able to participate in the MOU for the full 7 months, and execute all elements of the MOU because of the short time line plus unforeseen complications unique to their local communities. All 32 are interested in continuing partnership with DVR. Of the 28 Community Networks that completed work over the 7 month period, eight Tribes (three Tribes and a Tribal consortium representing 5 additional Tribes) and 24 counties were represented.</i></p>
OUTCOME 3 Administrative Set Up	<i>Complete</i>	<i>NA</i>	<p><i>The FPC established a new program specialist position to coordinate the work of the MOU. Senior Research Director Dario Longhi analyzed surveillance data for DVR needs assessment and related purposes. The FPC Director plus three additional administrative and policy professionals designed education, provided fiscal and administrative support to the project, provided policy guidance to Community Networks, and developed policy recommendations based on the data analysis,</i></p>

			<i>which is reported to DVR in a separate report. Additionally, the FPC executed a subcontract for consulting services from an expert in DVR operations and policy: Theresa VerWey. Report included (see Attachment 1).</i>
OUTCOME 4 Development of Locally-Tailored Models & Contractual Commitment	NA	Complete	<i>Community Networks worked with local vocational rehabilitation professionals to develop locally-tailored models that were consistent with the MOU. 32 Community Networks (listed in Attachment 2) had approved Statements of Work to complete feasibility inquiry, planning and design work. Design included a description of how the elements of the proposal would be sequenced and supported by locally-appropriate training and other resources. Community Networks built upon local strengths and resources to optimize skill-building and other activities that would reduce barriers to employment and improve job placement and retention.</i>
OUTCOME 5 World Café	NA	Complete	<i>The FPC executed a contract with World Café expert, Steven Byers, to tailor the World Café processes and principles for use in rural, urban and suburban communities for the purposes of this MOU. Mr. Byers provided expert help and other resources, on-site coaching, co-facilitation, and assistance as necessary for success. Report included (see Attachment 3).</i>
Milestone 2-a Contract Expert	NA	Complete	
Milestone 2-b Provide Expertise to Community Networks	NA	Complete	
OUTCOME 6 Referral Agreements	NA	Complete	<i>Most Community Networks had strong track records working with local schools to improve child and family outcomes. They used past success, and the relationships that were developed in past projects to improve referral, and youth who would be transitioning from high school into the life/work realm in the upcoming year. Additionally, Community Networks used their extensive list of past contractors and collaborators to enhance the system of support for people with disabilities increasing opportunities to participate in community-tailored activities.</i>
Milestone 3-a Agreements in place for referral entities	NA	Complete	
Milestone 3-b Interview of VRS and VRC	NA	Complete	
			<i>The FPC coordinated with the DVR Supervisors (VRS) to discuss the scope of the MOU, to learn about the specific local needs of DVR customers and staff, and to assess available time for the VRS or designated Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) to co-design with local Community Network staff an action plan that would</i>

			<p><i>best address the needs of their particular office/area. Local plans were developed in ways that were sensitive to available time and work priorities.</i></p> <p><i>Community Networks also worked directly with VRS and VRC to address community supports, referral options, or linkages to residents or professionals within the community that would be helpful from the counselors' perspective.</i></p>
OUTCOME 7 Mentors	NA	Complete	<p><i>Provision of training and development of structural linkages between Community Networks, local mentoring programs and DVR customers was originally planned to occur through Washington Mentors, the central organization that provides assistance to all mentor organizations in the state. These goals were achieved differently than originally planned. As it turned out, Community Networks had strong existing relationships with their local mentor programs and took initiative to work directly with them – providing training, promoting mentor-mentee matches, and educating mentor organizations about the DVR mission and services and issues related to reducing barriers to employment through mentor relationships.</i></p> <p><i>The FPC developed a 4-hour online professional course. The online course covers the basics of developmental neurobiology as it pertains to toxic stress during childhood, ACE and its effects, and resilience. These factors are highly correlated both with disabling conditions and with loss in daily functioning related to those conditions. Our analysis of WA surveillance data found that 52% of disability-related functional impairment is attributable to ACEs.</i></p> <p><i>In order to make this training more accessible to mentors, we provided free courses to Washington Mentors for distribution to mentor organizations throughout the state. The training will better prepare mentors to work with youth with disabilities and provide an important foundation of knowledge for mentors working with youth and adults with disability.</i></p>
OUTCOME 8 Events	NA	Complete	<p><i>15 Community Networks designed, scheduled, and promoted events for job seekers and students with disabilities. These events included motivational speakers, workshops, promotion of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, resource fairs, employment celebrations and networking opportunities to prepare individuals for job search and employment. At one event, attendees were able to connect directly with potential employers. Over 60 DVR customers, 150 potential employers, and 1,300 participants attended these events.</i></p>

OUTCOME 9 Needs Assessment Data	NA	Complete	<i>The FPC conducted extensive analysis of two years of Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) data from adults throughout Washington in 2009 and 2010. That analysis, along with narrative about the implications of findings for future DVR work, is included in a separate report.</i>
OUTCOME 10 Cross System-Learning	Complete	Complete	<i>Beginning in June 2011, FPC hosted weekly conference calls for all Community Network participants. FPC Staff and Consultants provided support. Initial call topics centered on increasing understanding of the MOU and interpretation of DVR terms. Conference calls were an effective means of sharing ideas and addressing concerns about developing statements of work, event planning and execution, sharing lessons learned, and improving effort sustainability. As Community Networks became more experienced, calls were hosted every other week. By September, call participants were learning from one another –successful work in one community would motivate others to design new elements to their work. Statements of Work were amended in September, October and November to accommodate this peer learning.</i>
OUTCOME 11 Administer the MOU	Complete	Complete	<i>Administered per the guidelines of the MOU.</i>

Implementation Successes

Exceptionally successful deliverables with great outcomes were the hallmark of this MOU. Two types of services are described in more detail below, World Café and Events. These focused on the strategy of multiple wins, which describes the ability for the community, the individual, and the employer to each successfully gain benefit from one activity. The FPC provided training in how to design work in order to produce multiple wins, and Community Networks and local DVR staff implemented this training to produce stunning success with a small investment.

World Café¹

Steven Byers was invited by several Community Networks to design and host local Cafés in a manner that best suited the local culture. In all cases small design teams were formed to determine the purpose of the particular Café, shape the questions for the conversations, and develop uses of the information generated by the local Cafés. Every design team was different, and every Café was different.

Mr. Byers commented on the suitability of The World Café method for this work. He offered, “For me, the World Café is an approach or method rather than a model; that is, the basic structure is not rigid and can be adapted to any community or culture or language. Indeed, the World Café experience is greatly enriched when designers and hosts are attentive to what is unique and powerful in their community. The World Café flows from a systems perspective or view of the world, which is consistent with Family Policy Council’s philosophy and practice.”



Cafés were tailored by the communities in a variety of ways. They included different community partners, and addressed different issues based on local needs and priorities. A sample of the variety of focus areas for the dialogue events includes:

- Focused on business leaders,
- Focused on parents and youth,
- Focused on educators and service providers,

¹ A World Café is a type of business meeting or organizational workshop that aims to provide an open and creative conversation on a topic of mutual interest to surface collective knowledge, share ideas and insights, and gain a deeper understanding of the subject and the issues involved.

- Hosted job/ resource fairs,
- Held conversation series with community leaders including employers, parents, youth, etc. and developed plans for sustainability of the project.

Interestingly, communities used Café conversations for multiple purposes. Café dialogues were used to engage people in conversation about disability, work, inclusion, the role of community support in successful employment, and other content areas. They were used to expand outreach to the friends, families, and colleagues of Café participants-essentially for snowball interviewing – where one person identifies several others, who identify several others, until a large circle of people are reached. Cafés also generated an alignment of resources. Community Networks concluded that holding the Café dialogues in a series was most useful for engaging more people in generating community solutions to deep problems like the exclusion of people with disabilities from employment. Also, hosting a series of dialogues enlarged the number and diversity of individuals who participated in the community discussions, and thereby improved understanding and awareness of DVR.

Café dialogues were well advertised; recruitment assured participation of targeted groups.

<i>Skills</i>	Mentor	Education	<i>Unemployed</i>	Vision	<i>Values</i>	<i>"Financial Crisis"</i>
<i>Hope</i>	<i>Relationships</i>	<i>Goals</i>	Success	DREAMS	Results	
<i>Diversity</i>	FOCUS	<i>Attitude</i>	<i>Overtime</i>	<i>\$\$\$</i>	Opportunity	
	<i>Inspiration</i>	<i>The future...</i>	<i>Thriving</i>	Education		

working in Jefferson County...

Vitality	Self-Sufficiency	Reliable	Security	Paycheck	Growing
Employed	<i>Acceptance</i>	COORDINATION	<i>Prevention</i>	PROGRESS	
Willingness:	<i>Service</i>	Support	Choice	LEARNING CURVE	<i>Chance</i>
Leaders	CHALLENGES	Job Market	Creativity	Ability!	

Please join us for a community conversation about employment in Jefferson County. The Jefferson County Community Network & Jefferson County Developmental Disabilities Board will host a world café-style meeting to discuss work-related issues for people with disabilities in our community.

Together we can:

- **SHARE** our information & experience
- **EXPLORE POSSIBILITIES** of enhancing partnerships with the business community and increasing community support
- **COLLABORATE** on future efforts to improve employment opportunities for people with disabilities


Information & Registration

Date: **Tuesday, December 6th**
Location: **Quimper Unitarian Universalist,**
2333 San Juan Avenue, Port Townsend, 98368
Time: **5:00pm to 7:30pm** (light dinner included)


Click here to register at:
<http://www.jeffcocommunitynetwork.org/registration>

Any questions? Please contact:
Anne Dean at adean@jeffcocommunitynetwork.org or 360-379-4495 or
Anna McNery at amcnery@co.jefferson.wa.us or 360-385-9410

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**Jefferson County
Community Network**
"Working together to help children, youth and families succeed"

The Café work of 2 Community Networks is summarized below.

	Outcome	Engagement/Feedback
Jefferson County Community Network	<p>The, <i>Working in Jefferson County</i>, World Café event brought a diverse group of 34 community members and service providers together to discuss the following questions:</p> <p>1st Conversation: <i>What's important to you about employment for people with disabilities in our community, and why do you care?</i></p> <p>2nd Conversation: <i>What relationships in our community need our attention right now?</i></p> <p>HARVEST Question: <i>What do we sense is Emerging? What new Partnerships are Possible?</i></p>	<p>The World Café generated feedback, challenges, and possible future actions. Participants shared statements like, “these discussions help create a sense of community and less ‘us and them’; Inclusion and diversity can help eliminate prejudice and barriers to employment.” Awareness increased about employment issues that impact people with disabilities, and employers’ ability to hire people with disabilities. Many participants were encouraged and excited about hosting more discussions and cafes, expanding education about “People First, Disability Second”, and maintaining and expanding programs that allow for improving employment-related competencies for people with disabilities. The World Café format was an excellent way for Jefferson County to begin looking at issues that surround employment for people with disabilities. Building off of the first Café, the planning group is planning on a second World Café for March, 2012. The focus of the second Café will be to expand participation and employer involvement.</p>
Northshore/Shoreline Community Network	<p>The Community Network and QuickStart Shoreline programs co-hosted a Café focused on: the value of hiring people with disabilities; why it is good for your business and right for the community. QuickStart Shoreline has regular monthly lunch events with business owners and employees in the North King County area to discuss ways to improve their business. The Community Network was offered the opportunity to have a Café style discussion at the October event. The participants were business partners and service providers for people with disabilities. The event was supported by the City of Shoreline, Shoreline Community College Small Business Accelerator, DVR North End, Shoreline Community College Student Services, and ExpressPros Employment agency.</p>	<p>The Work Café attracted around 20 people, both business people and service providers. According to the hosting entities, the most gratifying aspect of the Café was when business representatives were interested in learning more about hiring people with disabilities and how to make it happen. Employers said they did not know where to go to contact people with disabilities to employ. Sunny Rivera, North End DVR office, said that the DVR agency needs to become more visible among employers. Employers also realized that people with disabilities are “lumped” into a single category when there are very different levels of capabilities. As a result of the Café, two follow-up meetings have been held to discuss how to continue with this work in 2012.</p>

Events

The intent of Community Network events was twofold: 1) to prepare job seekers and students with disabilities for job search and employment, and 2) to improve awareness, skills and knowledge about the DVR system, reasons and benefits to hiring DVR customers, and to improve managers, employers, or business owner's interest in hiring DVR customers. The events hosted by the Issaquah Community Network and Tulalip Tribal Network described below highlights successful examples of these activities.

On November 12, 2012 the Issaquah Community Network and seven partner organizations hosted a Youth Job Skills Fair at Eastridge Church. DVR supervisor Danny Eng participated in the planning for this event. Ninety-five students participated in the Fair. Of these, eleven self-identified as students with disabilities. Most participants were 16 to 18 years old; with the oldest participant being 22. The Fair featured a keynote speaker and seven break-out speakers, and focused on job skills such as resume writing, interview skills, internships, networking, using social media in a job search, vocational employment, and on-the-job skills. Mentors from 27 skill areas were present, ranging from accounting to video production. The Community Network provided overall project coordination, assisted by the Issaquah Schools Foundation, the Issaquah Chamber of Commerce, the Issaquah Rotary, and the Sammamish Rotary, the Issaquah School District, the Issaquah Youth Advisory Board, and the Sammamish Youth Advisory Board. In addition, the Community Network established a new partnership with the Bellevue College Occupational and Life Skills Department.

The Community Network expected two outcomes: 1) an immediate improvement in individual employment-related skills, knowledge, ability, attitude and competencies on the part of participating youth (keynote speakers, breakout speakers, and skill area mentors were all coached to emphasize these areas in their presentations and interactions with participating youth); and 2) a community-wide improvement in awareness of DVR programs, and increased connections between the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and many community organizations providing employment-related skills to youth. Evaluation of the event included a written survey submitted by the participating students as they left the event and an online survey completed by the adults after the event. Evaluations showed improved knowledge, connections between youth and adults specific to the interest of the youth, and high levels of satisfaction with content and format of the event, which was reflected in development of new partnerships.

Youth Job Skills Fair

November 12, 2011
Program

10:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.....Registration

10:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.....Keynote speaker: Houston Kraft
Worship Center

11:10 a.m. - 11:40 a.m.First breakout session

11:50 a.m. - 12:20 p.m.....Second breakout session

12:20 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.Lunch with skill area mentors
Jammin' Cafe

1:10 p.m. - 1:40 p.m.Third breakout session

1:40 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.....Wrap-up and door prizes
(must be present to win!)
Worship Center

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS:



We greatly appreciate the support of Eastridge Church, which donated a large part of the facility rental fees, making this event possible.

The Community Network recruited four new partner organizations through this project. In addition, as a result of this project, Echo Glen correctional facility will host a Youth Job Skills Fair for incarcerated youth on April 25, 2012. All students at Echo Glen will be eligible for DVR services when they return to the community setting. Local DVR staff continues to participate in the planning for this spring event.

The Tulalip Tribal Community Network hosted a Resource Fair event gathering 18 social service providers from the Tulalip Tribes and from outside agencies. This was the first time most of these agencies had even worked together to conduct outreach in this way. This event was co-sponsored by the Behavioral Health Department of the Tulalip Tribes and the North Intertribal Vocational Rehabilitation Program. Eighty five (85) people completed the registration form at the resource fair that provided valuable information about the top issues individuals were facing in seeking employment. The Tribe's total population is about 4,000, so surveys were collected for over 2% of the entire population. Now this community has a better idea of what services individuals are in need of and what information would be helpful for them to gain employment.

Implementation Challenges

Along with the many successes of this partnership there were also challenges. There were two outcomes that proved to be more challenging for implementation; Development of Locally-Tailored Models and Contractual Commitment, and Mentors.

Development of Locally-Tailored Models and Contractual Commitment

Twenty-eight (28) Community Networks came to training, made a commitment to participate, and conducted work through the entire 7-month period of the MOU. Of the 28 Community Networks that maintained their commitment, 8 tribes and 24 counties were represented. These Community Networks developed locally-tailored models and contractually committed through Statements of Work and Service Proposals to complete work. The Proposals were approved by both parties, FPC and Community Networks, after adjustments were made based on our DVR expert consultant's review of proposals.

Participation grew until 32 Community Networks made an initial commitment to the partnership. However, due to unforeseen complications, 4 Community Networks were not able to conduct work through the entire 7-month period covered by the MOU. Some Community Networks experienced turnover in key partnership positions during the time of this project. Others were challenged by the tight time frame. One community suffered the tragic loss of a long-time key leader of youth programming; her death, and the grieving process for the community, made it impossible for the Community Network to start a new project in this timeframe. Currently, there are at least four Community Networks waiting in the wings, hoping that this partnership will continue. Several additional Community Networks are now extremely interested in implementing a partnership with DVR in their community.

Mentors

FPC intended to develop and implement an agreement with Washington Mentors to assist in providing training and materials for mentors in communities working specifically with DVR customers. Efforts with mentor organizations were already established locally, so the main body of work with mentor organizations was through these local affiliations, instead of through Washington Mentors. Local Community Networks used existing training tools, and made adjustments, as needed to support mentor participation with DVR-eligible youth and parents. In consultation with Washington Mentors, FPC was able to provide free access to web-based curriculum on ACEs, developmental neurobiology and resiliency. As a result, FPC completed this activity in a different and more efficient way than originally envisioned.

In addition to the training provided, some local Community Networks built upon already existing partnerships and built mentoring into their work. For example, the Jefferson County Community Network (JCCN) contracted with Jefferson County's Developmental Disabilities Coordinator and created a community-based mentoring program, Project MENTOR, that matched six young adults with disabilities, who have transitioned or will be transitioning from high school, with Senior Volunteers from Olympic Community Action Program's Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). This program builds skills to increase job placement and retention through participation in short-term volunteer work experience of between 25 to 40 hours. This partnership with the local DVR Counselor, three school districts, RSVP Coordinator, and the Building Futures mentoring program allowed the Coordinator of services for people with developmental disabilities and JCCN Program Manager to create new avenues for improving employment-related skills, knowledge, and competencies for DVR eligible young adults. All participants in Project MENTOR were invited to a Tea Party on January 30, 2012, to discuss the Project MENTOR experience, share successes, share opportunities for growth, and make plans for keeping this program functioning in Jefferson County.

"Two Project MENTOR students were placed in our OlyCAP Thrift Store. Neither student had successful work experience prior to coming into the program. Both had a few difficulties learning some basic job related skills – like calling in when ill and wearing appropriate attire. But each worked hard, basically overcame those challenges, developed good working relationships with their mentors, and contributed to the running of a very busy thrift store.

I knew it was a success when one day I walked in and our young man was not wearing a stocking hat, sweats, and sunglasses, but a white shirt, tie, and a friendly smile for our customers. Our other participant learned to call in, show up, and sort huge piles of clothing. She worked very well with her sorting/pricing team. And above and beyond her job experience, this young woman now had older adults willing to support her when her family was undergoing serious stress. And our clothing team had a real helper. I'm excited to be able to include more students – and volunteer mentors in this process. [This was] a real win-win for everyone!"

Sheila Ramsey, AmeriCorps Service Member, OlyCAP Volunteer Coordinator

Strategic Lessons Learned

The FPC decided to consult with an expert in the DVR field, Theresa VerWey. Ms. VerWey was recommended as a preferred provider for DVR-related projects. Ms. VerWey added immeasurable value to the partnership and offered a perspective that decreased the learning curve for FPC staff. The tight timeline to get partnership activities functioning was a concern for both the Community Networks and DVR partners (seven months from start to finish). To expedite the creation of local partnerships between the Community Networks and the respective local DVR staff, Ms. VerWey personally called each DVR Vocational Rehabilitation Supervisor (VRS) to inform him or her of the MOU and to anticipate contact from a local Community Network representative. This outreach was crucial to the formation of local DVR-Community Network partnerships. Rarely did a VRS have any prior knowledge about the Community Networks. Likewise, rarely did the Community Network staff have any knowledge of, or relationship with, local DVR staff. As a result, it is necessary to communicate simultaneously with DVR and Community Network partners. Each VRS needs to be kept up to date with the progress of the partnership. As this partnership continues, communication with each VRS should occur concurrent with the implementation of any new projects.

Another important lesson was learned about youth outreach. Benton County Community Network attempted to host a Community Café on September 23, 2011. Although several youth were expected to attend this event, none showed. Despite the Community Network's disappointment, organizers viewed this as learning opportunity. The Community Network decided that in order to get youth to attend their event they would need to go to the youth. They planned a follow-up Café at New Horizons High School for October 18, 2011. The "Take 2" Café was held with 30 Leadership Students in attendance. Participants considered it successful. The need for services was discussed, and the students learned about DVR and employment opportunities available.

Data Analysis

Highlights of findings from the data analysis conducted by FPC are described here. A separate report is provided to DVR with detailed findings, related scientific findings, and ideas for DVR application of the findings in future work. FPC combined two years of Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BFRSS) data and conducted extensive analysis of adults in Washington from 2009 and 2010.

Major Findings

1. Among people with disabilities, unemployment is highly correlated with lost days of functioning and not significantly correlated with their disabling condition. This is good news because as people more consistently engage in usual daily activities through targeted supports the likelihood of employment is improved.

2. People with a disability-related impairment in daily functioning (disability score) are more likely to have a history of Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE). Fifty-two percent of disability-related impairment in daily functioning is attributable to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).
3. People with a disability-related impairment in daily functioning are more likely to have experienced major adversities in adulthood than people without disabilities. Adult homelessness, incarceration, work-related injury or illness, separation/divorce, chronic illness, and severe depression are more common among people with disabling conditions.
4. People with a history of toxic stress, both in childhood and during adulthood, are significantly more likely to have a large number of days each month when they cannot do their normal work/life activities. This loss of functioning is hard to overcome in terms of employment.
5. Social and emotional support, feeling fortunate in life, and hope for one's future are powerful resiliency factors for overcoming unemployment among adults with disabling conditions. These resiliency factors have a compounding effect. When high levels of all three factors are present, the rate of unemployment drops for a large portion of adults with disabling conditions.
6. Communities can be more or less effective in solving problems and supporting resiliency. In communities with a high capacity for coming together to address important issues, people with disabilities are more likely to be employed, even in bad labor markets. Young adults living in communities that have consistently scored high on the FPC Community Capacity Index (1998 -2009) have better than predicted rates of having:
 - More than a high school education,
 - An ACE score of < 3,
 - Fewer days per month when a disabling condition kept them from doing usual daily activities, and
 - Higher resiliency scores.
7. Community variation is vast in Washington. The prevalence of disability-related factors that affect employment success is not uniform across the state, or across any "type" of county.

Financial Report on Outcomes

<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Total Funds Expended</i>
OUTCOME 1 -Training Sessions for Community Network Staff/Board Milestone 1-a: Training in Eastern WA Milestone 1-b: Training in Western WA Additional Trainings	\$32,000
OUTCOME 2 - 28 Community Networks Commitment to Participate	\$420,000
OUTCOME 3 - Administrative Set Up	\$47,000
OUTCOME 4 -Development of Models & Contractual Commitment	\$480,000
OUTCOME 5 - World Café Milestone 2-a : Contract Expert Milestone 2-b: Provide Expertise to Community Networks	\$52,500
OUTCOME 6 - Referral Agreements Milestone 3-a: Agreements in place for referral entities Milestone 3-b: Interview of VRS and VRC	\$20,000
OUTCOME 7 - Mentors	\$15,000
OUTCOME 8 - Events	\$50,000
OUTCOME 9 - Needs Assessment Data and Analysis	\$150,000
OUTCOME 10 - Cross System-Learning	\$10,000
OUTCOME 11 - Administer the MOU	\$23,500

Note: The FPC staff contributed additional time and resources for data analysis and production of the Stress, Strength, Work, Hope report for DVR.

Sustainability

Community Networks involved in this partnership reported an interest in continuing to build on their successes thus far. Twelve Community Networks are continuing the work with their state general fund budget. The work of 11 Community Networks will be sustained without additional investment because of the relationships developed between the Community Networks and DVR partners. In these communities, future work with DVR will yield new partnerships and avenues for improving employment outcomes.

“Embracing the DVR partnership was not without its risks, particularly from the “systems” standpoint of investing significant time and energy into a 6-month pilot, and asking partners to step forward with their time and involvement, while acknowledging the uncertainty of whether the Community Network would be able to continue its level of leadership if the partnership with DVR is not extended. Hopefully, the partnerships forged during this pilot will remain effective and the outcomes noted will extend.”

Teri Barila, Walla Walla Community Network Staff

The FPC is very interested in continuing the partnership with DVR. Feedback from Community Networks, local DVR offices, and community members has been extremely positive. Community Networks are ready to continue local work they began during this project, try out new ideas, and focus on improving employment for persons with disabilities in their communities. Several examples of ongoing work are highlighted below:

The Cowlitz County Community Network is meeting with the Cowlitz County Transportation Manager who showed interest in their project focusing on the lack of transportation options for DVR customers. This is one of the greatest barriers to employment in this mostly rural county. The publication of a comprehensive list of transportation options available in Cowlitz County was the focus of one of the projects between the Community Network and DVR partnership.

The Skagit County Child and Family Consortium partnered with WorkSource and the Workforce Development Council to host a three-part workshop series for youth with disabilities to develop employment-related skills, knowledge, attitude, and competencies. The Sedro-Woolley School District joined the efforts and recommended students to participate in the program. All of the high school students involved in this program found employment upon graduation. As a result of the success of this new partnership, this program will continue this Spring.

Benton and Franklin County Community Networks invited their local DVR office to provide a presentation about the services offered in their community to the local Rotary Club. Jim Bischoff, VRC and Pablo Villarreal, VRS, attended one of the Pasco Kennewick Rotary Club’s regular meetings. Mr. Bischoff prepared an excellent presentation with lots of information for employers in an informal manner that was well received by the club. Several members came up to Gail Greager, Benton/Franklin Community Network Consultant, after the meeting and mentioned that Mr. Bischoff would make a great

addition to the Rotary. Mr. Bischoff was invited, and accepted a membership in the Pasco Kennewick Rotary Club. Since the Rotary Club members are mostly employers, this membership will be advantageous for DVR customers.

Invitation for DVR to provide us with Feedback

The FPC is committed to this partnership because we are committed to the integrity of the DVR system, DVR customers, DVR employers, and the communities that DVR serves. We want to know how we can be most helpful. We invite you to provide us with any feedback that you have received from professionals in the DVR system, community partners, or other participants.

Success Stories

Chi-e-chee Tribal Network

Twelve youth between the ages of 14 and 18 participated in a six-week employment program where youth learned more about job seeking skills and what it means to be a good employee, and had the opportunity to practice basic skills relating to office and administrative support. This program provided an opportunity for a two-week break for participants to attend the Tribal Canoe Journeys and, in turn, allowed for the youth to work hard at their jobs and then heal, grow, and learn with their culture and traditions. Combining employment opportunities and culture is essential for each youth's well-being.

Columbia County Community Network

Among their many activities, the Columbia County Community Network provided a grant that allowed a young man to continue his vocational training over the summer. This opportunity allowed him to continue working on building social skills, maintaining work related friendships, building more self-confidence and decision making skills as well as learning to advocate for himself. Without this opportunity it is likely that he would have lost some of his skills and motivation. This opportunity allowed him to continue to succeed in his current position and better prepare him for future employment in the community.

Greater Pierce County Community Network and Tacoma Urban Network

Greater Pierce County Community Network, the REACH Center, Tacoma Goodwill, Vadis, and DVR identified engagement of youth/young adults with 504 plans as being a population that was difficult to engage, yet would benefit from services. In order to reach youth and young adults who may have been eligible for DVR services, a variety of outreach strategies were selected including personal phone calls, events and job fairs. A focus on direct communication was selected since youth frequently miss appointments or do not attend scheduled events. The direct phone calls helped to ensure better attendance and follow through of youth. A barbeque outreach event, job fair, and networking event were each selected as a means of engaging youth in a variety of ways. Outreach also included personal invitations to attend events, invitations to orientations and trainings, and follow-up throughout the DVR orientation and application process. The project reached over 357 youth and made phone contact with over 400 youth. Additionally, a total of 61 people were referred to DVR. Thus far, this collaborative effort has helped a total of 33 people complete DVR's application for services.

Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe

The Teen Exploration Program has been providing employment opportunities for Jamestown S'Klallam Tribal teenagers for over two years. During this time the coordinator found that there were individuals being served that faced barriers to employment due to disability issues and that there was a need for intervention strategies that would assist the youth in being successful. As a result of the partnership between DVR and the Community Networks, accommodations were made to help assure employee success that consisted mostly of job coaching, problem solving activities, and working environments. Twenty-one youth in the program performed well in their employment placements in the Tribal community and in the larger community after acquiring soft skills for employment through program activities and instructions. At the end of the job placement period the program coordinator arranged for an employer/employee appreciation banquet that honored the achievements of the youth and employers. Over 60 guests plus youth attended the banquet.

Kitsap County Community Network

Cassie was referred early on by DVR and expressed an interest in working with kids. Cassie was placed at Olympic College Child Development Center to work with 3-5 year olds. She ended up being very successful there, enjoyed the job very much. Because of this, the program was able to extend her hours, and Cassie was able to work until the project ended in December. In fact, she was so successful that she was asked to fill out an application for permanent employment, and she is now being considered for an ongoing position.

Ashley was referred to the DVR project early on and took a position as a receptionist at the WorkSource site in Bremerton. She was nervous about working long hours so she started out part-time. She did so well in her position that she was asked if she would consider working more hours. With the support of her counselor she started working close to full-time. Supervisors and coworkers have all complimented her on her great efficiency. By the end of her work experience she was offered several letters of reference. She is so confident now that she has applied for several full-time positions and hopes to be hired soon.

Attachment 1

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Family Policy Council Partnership Report

Theresa VerWey
Consultant

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On April 11, 2011, Laura Porter, Staff Director of the Family Policy Council and Andres Aguirre, Interim Director of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) agreed to a Memorandum of Understanding between their organizations. The expressed intent of the agreement was that with funds provided by DVR the Family Policy Council (FPC) would provide outcomes that emphasized outreach to organizations that would improve referrals of VR qualified individuals, create relationships with employers who could provide improved employment opportunities for VR qualified individuals and help VR counselors learn about community specific needs.

With a very short time frame for execution of all projects (all services were to be completed by December 15, 2011), it was important for linkages between these two organizations to occur quickly and for productive relationships to develop almost immediately. The FPC held a series of meeting to inform the 42 statewide networks about the opportunity to submit proposals. Most DVR supervisors initially learned about this MOU and partnership through an e-mail sent from the DVR State Office.

To expedite the creation of local partnerships between the Networks and the respective local DVR staff, our consultant often personally called the DVR Vocational Rehabilitation Supervisors (VRS) to inform them of the MOU and to inform the VRS to anticipate contact from a local network representative. Rarely did a VRS have any prior knowledge re: the FPC community networks. By the same token, rarely did the community network staff have any knowledge of or relationship with local DVR staff. This phone conversation was also an opportunity to discuss the scope of the MOU, to assess the VRS's office demands and the ability of the VRS or designated Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) to allocate time to team with local network staff and to discuss ways the VRS might team with the Network partner to address the needs of their particular office/area.

During the course of the MOU, the FPC consultant spoke with sixteen VRSs across the state...Tina Bredengerd (Kelso), Donna Dalzell and Dudley Bowers (Spokane), Sunny Rivera and Lauren Caldwell (N Seattle), Danny Eng (Bellevue), John Evans(Seattle) , Eileen Fielding (Wapato), Darcy Haughian (Mount Vernon), Duane Johnson (Wenatchee/Omak/Moses Lake), Carl Johnston (Bellingham), Suzanne Montiero (Everett), Jim O'Brien (Lynnwood), Pat Raines (Olympia), Paul Vertrees (Silverdale) and Cindy Williams (Vancouver). Contact information was provided to the Network for Esther Bennett (Tacoma) and Rachel Carney (Puyallup)...but, a Statement of Work for this area was not submitted for review so

the FPC consultant did not make calls to either of these VRSs. In addition, three VRSs are in areas that did not have network events...Jan Staroski (Kent), Rudy Hernandez (SeaTac) and Adam Valdez (Yakima). Several VRSs were not aware of the MOU. The conversation with the FPC consultant seemed valuable in preparing the VRS to consider issues that would expedite their conversations with community network partners. In some instances, the FPC consultant was able to address initial misunderstandings that occurred when a Network had created some draft proposals prior to connecting with their local DVR staff. These conversations helped provide the DVR VRS with clarity about MOU outcomes.

Throughout the state, VRSs strived to partner with local networks. There were certainly some significant impediments for both networks and DVR staff. Of the 42 networks, 32 chose to submit statements of work. Due to the short timeline of this partnership, Networks were given the opportunity to decide if this opportunity would be a good fit. As a result some Networks chose not to participate. Reasons for their decision varied based on issues such as low or no Network staff and lack of connection to current Network work. Some VRSs had limited availability because of staff vacancies and demands that the VRS cover for caseload responsibilities. In one instance, contact was made with the Area Manager, David Hankinson, to identify the appropriate local contact because a temporary VRS was hired. Initially, some DVR staff struggled to understand who the Networks are and what they do. Some VRSs expressed their need to develop a sense of how the FPC activities were going to result in a clear benefit for DVR.

Once connections were made and goals were clarified, rapid relationship building was common. Occasionally there were follow up phone calls between the FPC consultant and the VRS. However, usually once a relationship was established between the local DVR VRS and the Network staff, they moved forward in planning their local event with consultation occurring during our weekly network conference call. Some network staff did request a small group consultation for an in depth conversation re: their proposed/ planned activities with Elena Popovac, Theresa VerWey and sometimes Avreayl Jacobson. There has been consistent feedback that the MOU has led to the creation of new and exceedingly valuable partnerships and collaboration between Networks and DVR staff.

As proposals / Statements of Work were submitted to the FPC State Office, they were reviewed and approved. Each proposal was reflective of the community of origin. Most proposals reflect a maximization of existing relationships and talents of the local staff. This was particularly important because of the short time frame for funding. Some striking examples include: a network staff member who was able to use her relationship with the local community college to secure access to a community college site for a large event on a day before the beginning of fall classes...a staff member who used her role as past President of the local Rotary as an inroad for a community café conversation with local business leaders...a network that partnered with a tribe to plan a large employment event...a VRS that was able to identify internal DVR staff members to facilitate a job seeking workshop. There are numerous examples in the report addendum, which provide more details regarding the specifics of each event.

One of the explicit goals of the MOU was to create new relationships that will increase the employability of youth particularly those with disabilities. A second goal was to target parents with disabilities. Network staff targeted representatives from DVR, school districts, businesses, social service agencies, students, parents and government agencies as they developed plans for workshops and events.

Beginning in June, weekly conference calls were scheduled for all that wanted to participate. Elena Popovac provided FPC staff support and Theresa Mullen VerWey provided consultation regarding disability issues. Participation ranged from 6-14 individuals. Initial call topics centered on increasing understanding of the MOU, on interpretation of DVR terms, on clarifications re: the DVR manual requirements for services and on resources for employers interested in hiring individuals with disabilities. Many networks were adding a focus on youth with disabilities to their expertise in working with at risk youth. Networks needed to develop a clear sense of expectations for creating connections to DVR customers (current and potential). It was also important for Networks to understand how to best connect with the local DVR office when serving High School students (DVR has designated VRCs who have relationships with high school transition programs...and Networks needed to get to know those specific DVR VRCs). It seemed especially helpful when the FPC consultant was able to provide DVR WAC citations for terms like assessment and competitive employment. This seemed to prevent misunderstandings because of semantics and organization specific definitions.

A dilemma, which needed to be immediately addressed, was a DVR staff concern that Network interventions with students would create confusion re: DVR transition services. This highlighted the critical importance of front-end discussions and the creation of collaborative proposals. Although this was not a mandatory first step, it is clear that a conversation between the Network staff and the local DVR VRS or VRC was the ideal first step prior to the creation of even draft statements of work. These conversations yielded high buy-in and satisfaction by both parties.

It was also helpful for Network staff to have insight to the caseload and office demands of their local office. Due to the statewide hiring freeze, several DVR offices had vacancies that impacted the ability of DVR staff to participate in the accelerated planning schedule that was necessary because of the MOU's short funding cycle. Networks were also surprised to learn about the large geographic coverage responsibilities of some VRSs. Several VRSs had multiple Networks functioning within the boundaries of their VR supervisory unit. It was clearly a challenge for a VRS with 3 and sometimes 4 networks requesting their participation. The time commitment made by VRSs with multiple networks was especially impressive.

By the end of June, 15 networks had expressed an interest in submitting proposals. Ultimately, 28 of the 42 networks organized activities. Conference calls were an effective means of sharing ideas and addressing concerns regarding the development of statements of work, event planning and execution, lessons learned post events (this seemed particularly helpful for those who had upcoming events), and sustainability of efforts.

Several outstanding skill building events were held and addressed topics like... employment resources, on-line applications, how to prepare for employment, resume writing, tips for a successful job search, interviewing techniques, social skills in the workplace. The FPC consultant was able to attend Pathway to Possibilities event (sponsored by the Cowlitz County Indian Tribes), Overcoming Barriers to Employment event (Shoreline Community College), the North Seattle/Shoreline Community Café, the Kennewick Rotary Community Café, Together We Can Event (Kelso), a workshop with Joe Erpenbeck (follow-up to the Whatcom County event) and the Jefferson County Community Café (Port Townsend). Each of these events highlighted the fact that many of the Network events could provide a valuable template for planning future community events or cafes. Some organizers were very successful in identifying potential participants and insuring their ability to participate by coordinating special transportation to the event. Each of the events was carefully scheduled for times of day or particular days of the week to maximize participation. Some events were breakfast or lunch meetings, others were daylong events during the week, some were in the evening and several were on the weekend... Each Network seemed to carefully evaluate numerous factors to make their event a success... and tailor made the event for their community.

Community Network connections to employers led to introductions and conversations with local DVR staff. The intent of the MOU was to expand employment opportunities for DVR customers. Not only did employers come to know DVR staff, there were valuable conversations re: hiring individuals with disabilities, how to address issues of reasonable accommodation, employer tax incentives and supports that DVR can provide. These conversations addressed myths and misunderstanding re: individuals with disabilities. Some employers openly shared a fear of the unknown when discussing the topic of hiring a person with a disability.

Steve Byers' report discusses the World Café technique, which was used in several communities to facilitate conversations and increase community wisdom about individuals with disabilities and work opportunities.

Observations for the Future

If there is an opportunity for future collaboration, it would be ideal for DVR VRSs to be informed at a statewide meeting where the Director can communicate the goals of the partnership to all of the VRSs at the same time. This would also be an opportunity for VRSs to discuss their involvement with the Networks, to describe the events that were held in their local community and to share their positive outcomes.

I would predict that there may be concern that there were no Network events in some areas of the State. This might be addressed by considering ways that invitations for Network events be extended to include areas that lack a Network or have a Network that is unable to sponsor an event. Or, staff might be able to replicate an event that occurred. This type of planning support could be especially helpful where staff feel they have limited time available.

It would also be ideal if communication to the Networks could occur at the same time...or almost the same time. "Simultaneous" communication could help enhance buy in and coordination of efforts on both sides.

In the future, there will be 16 VRSs who now know their Network partners. VRSs and Network partners are certainly going to have valuable feedback re: activities that occurred during the MOU. And, the impact of MOU funded events will continue to emerge. Creating new relationships with employers takes time. It will be valuable to continue to hear from VRSs about the long term impact of the MOU.

On numerous occasions, Network staff said that they would like to know about all of the events that were funded by the MOU. Sharing information about the 28 Networks that did participate will be appreciated. This could provide inspiration for those developing plans for future community events. Also, this could provide wonderful technical assistance and guidance.

Throughout the MOU, Networks have been very willing to share expertise and information during the weekly conference calls. However, not every Network was able to participate due to time constraints or other conflicts. This type of document could provide information to all 42 of the partners.

Network staff and DVR staff demonstrated their commitment to the intent of the MOU. With a common goal of improving employment opportunities for VR qualified individuals, 22 events were held over the past 6 months and over 2,500 Washington residents attended these events. The impact of these community events will continue to be seen in the coming months and year(s).

Attachment 2

Participating Community Networks Contact List

<u>Community Network</u>	<u>Contact</u>	<u>Email</u>
1. Adams County Community Network	Barbara Anderson	accn@atnet.net
2. Asotin/Garfield Community Network	Sue Bancroft	bancroft@clarkston.com
3. Benton County Community Network Consultant	Gail Greager	gailgreager@yahoo.com
4. Chelan/Douglas Community Network	MaryAnne Preece	maryannep@nwi.net
5. Chi-e-Chee Network	Kelly Baze	sullyk@pgst.nsn.us
6. Clark County Community Network	Carol Hall	carol.hall@esd112.org
7. Columbia County Community Network	Nancy Butler	nbutler@columbiainet.com
8. Cowlitz County Community Network	Sharon Weinhold	cowlitzntwk@mpcu.net
9. Eastside King County Community Outreach Coordinator	Paula Matthyse	paulamatthyse@gmail.com
10. Franklin County Community Network Consultant	Gail Greager	gailgreager@yahoo.com
11. Grays Harbor County Community Network	Gregory Johnson	GregorianGroup@live.com
12. Greater Pierce County Community Network	Sarah Kluesner	skluesner@gmail.com
13. Issaquah Community Network	Judy Brewer	jbissy@aol.com
14. Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe Network	Jessica Payne	jpayne@jamestowntribe.org
15. Jefferson County Community Network	Anne Dean	adean@co.jefferson.wa.us
16. Kitsap County Community Network	Gay Neal	gneal@co.kitsap.wa.us
17. Lewis County Community Network	Trish McNabb	brue2blue@comcast.net
18. Mason County Community Network	Kim Klint	kak@co.mason.wa.us
19. Northshore/Shoreline Community Network	Judy Parsons	NSSLNETWORK@shorelineschools.org
20. Okanogan County Community Network	Rochelle Riling	seamouse@televar.com
21. Skagit County Community Network	Lyndie Case	Lyndie.Case@unitedgeneral.org
22. Snohomish County Community Network	Jim Teverbaugh	jteverbaugh@snoconetwork.org
23. Snoqualmie Valley Community Network	Kristy Trione	svcn@msn.com
24. SPIPA Community Network	Mary Myhre	mmyhre@spipa.org
25. Spokane County Community Network	Roy Harrington	harri@wsu.edu
26. Tacoma Urban Community Network	Greg Tanbara	GTanbara@tpchd.org
27. Thurston County Community Network	Ann Aubuchon	annaubuchon@gmail.com
28. Tulalip Community Network	Alison Bowen	abowen@tulaliptribes-nsn.gov
29. Wahkiakum County Community Network	Lia Sealund	lsealund@yahoo.com
30. Walla Walla County Community Network	Teri Barila	teri.barila@wwcc.edu
31. Whatcom County Community Network	Geof Morgan	geofmorgan@wfcn.org
32. Yakima County Community Network	Susan Martin	Susan.Martin@esd105.org

Attachment 3

People & Work Cafés
FPC/DVR Partnership
2011 Collaborations, Events and Outcomes

Steven Byers
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*The World Café is an easy-to-use **method** for creating dynamic networks of conversation and knowledge sharing around questions that matter to your real work. Linking small- and large-group dialogues, Café conversations utilize the principles of living systems to access sources of creativity and collective intelligence that might not be available through more traditional approaches.*

*The World Café is also a provocative **metaphor** for noticing and engaging the informal networks of conversation that naturally occur inside and outside the organization. Both as a method and a metaphor, the World Café encourages us to intentionally engage the vitality of networks of conversation to share knowledge and shape the future.*

Juanita Brown & David Isaacs

Introduction

I worked with every Community Network that invited me and in a manner that best suited the local intentions. In all cases we formed small design teams to determine the purpose of the particular Café, possible uses of the harvested wisdom, and to shape the questions for the conversations. I met face to face at least once with every design team, except for Adams County, where I provided some feedback on proposed Café questions via email. Every design team was different, and every Café was different. The energy and dedication of the Network coordinators and Board members and volunteers was similar and amazing in each community. I felt fully appreciated in each community, and completely enjoyed all the new relationships that emerged from this work.

Some Cafés focused on business leaders, some on parents and youth, some on educators and service providers. Some Cafés took place in a larger context, such as a job fair. At one such larger event in Fall City (Snoqualmie Valley Community Network), David Korten was a keynote speaker and also participated in a Café conversation. Some communities hosted a series of Cafés, and I believe some communities are considering how they might host an ongoing conversation (such as the Whatcom Community Network has already been doing before this current work).

In most communities I co-hosted the Cafe with someone from the Network so that we could avoid any suggestion that an expert was needed to do this work. I was always concerned about inviting others to contribute and participate so that we would not only be increasing community awareness about the

issue but also building capacity in the community to design and host meaningful conversations. Graphic recorders assisted in Snoqualmie Valley (Anna Ulanova) and Thurston County (Kristi Sogn).

I would also like to comment on the suitability of The World Café for this work. For me, The World Café is an approach or method rather than a model; that is, the basic structure is not rigid and can be adapted to any community or culture or language. Indeed, The World Café experience is greatly enriched when designers and hosts are attentive to what is unique and powerful in their community. The World Café flows from a systems perspective or view of the world, which is consistent with FPC's philosophy and practice.

World Cafés

I worked with these Community Networks to design and co-host one or more Cafés: Benton Franklin, Thurston County, Walla Walla County, Northshore/Shoreline, Snoqualmie Valley, and Jefferson County. I provided consultation for Café questions for Adams County. I attended a Café designed and hosted by Eastside Network coordinator, Paula Matthyse.

I had preliminary conversations with Network staff from Cowlitz County, Asotin/Garfield Counties, Lewis County, and Chelan/Douglas Counties.

What were the questions?

As we all appreciate, powerful questions are key to meaningful conversations. Each design team developed questions for their community. Here is a sample of questions considered by design teams, some of which were offered to Café participants:

- How has my own experience led to a better understanding of my world and myself?
- How do we build community where people are welcomed and not isolated?
- How do we create ways for people to contribute to the community and the economy?
- What's important to you about employment for people with disabilities in our community, and why do you care?
- What relationships in our community need attention right now?
- What do we sense is emerging? What new partnerships are possible?
- What does our community know about people with disabilities and employment opportunities?
- What obstacles do you see when you consider hiring a person with disabilities?
- What would encourage you to hire a person with disabilities?
- What can we create together that we cannot do alone?
- What does our community need to learn about life challenges and employment?
- What would you say to an employer to make them want to hire people like you?
- What would you say to employers to increase employment opportunities for person with intellectual and developmental challenges?

- Consider this statement: A strong community does not waste any of its people. 'Labeled people' have a critical role to play in contributing to our community. Please respond to this statement. What comes up for you?
- If you were a student with a disability, and you're looking ahead to your life after high school, what do you need to know or learn?
- What insights do you have from our conversations this evening? What do you notice about your thinking? What has shifted for you? What are your thoughts about ownership of the issue of employment and people with a disability?
- What would it look like if everyone over age of 16 who wanted a job in our community had work they enjoyed and it financially supported them?
- What can we, as a community, do to help people become employed in meaningful work when they have no prior employment history?
- What do you love to do?
- What would you like employers in this community to know about you?
- What skills and gifts to you have to offer to your community or prospective employers?
- What meaningful work would you like to do that would contribute both to your own livelihood and to the betterment of our community?
- What are ways to prepare to do such meaningful work? What specific skills might be important? What help do you need?
- What would you like to learn that would benefit you and our community? What help do you need?
- Why might it be a good idea for someone to hire students or recent graduates who lack work experience and might have special needs?
- Who benefits when someone hires students or recent graduates who lack work experience and might have special needs?
- What are the long-term benefits to individuals, businesses, and our community when someone hires students or...etc.?

World Café Workshops

One goal of this work is to increase local capacity to host meaningful conversations about questions that matter to specific communities. Therefore, I offered several four hour World Café Workshops in different communities. Participants experienced an actual Café and also learned experientially about designing a Café, shaping questions, and harvesting the collective wisdom. Workshop participants were diverse with respect to the nature of their work and intended applications (e.g., Occupy Olympia movement, the early learning community, advocates for people who are homeless, youth services, college students, a graphic recorder, AmeriCorps workers, DSHS staff, and staff from the county prosecutor's office). I teamed with Paula Matthyse to design and present these workshops. In my experience, it's always better to model having two hosts, and it was another way of increasing capacity

in the Network. And it was delightful for me to learn from Paula's hosting practice. I felt fortunate to have her as a partner in this work.

Walla Walla about 18 people
Thurston about 48 people
Whatcom (January 26, 2012) about 55 estimated
Eastside (2012, date to be determined)
Benton Franklin (under consideration)

What did we learn?

Here are some things I think we learned. I'm sure individual Networks have additional learning to share, particularly regarding specific actions that might have emerged from conversations.

- The World Café is a useful way of convening people for conversation about this topic.
- Some particular actions emerged directly from some Café conversations.
- It was important not to bring a "one size of Café fits all" attitude; each Café had unique questions and harvests.
- More thinking is needed around the harvest and how to make use of the collective wisdom from these conversations.
- It might be useful to hold a larger Café on this topic when Networks are already gathered for some purpose.
- Graphic recording would be nice to have all the time. And that this would be a useful capacity to continue to develop within the Network community.
- Others in the community appreciated learning about the World Café approach.
- A single Café conversation is rarely sufficient for any complex issue. At the fourth Benton Franklin café, people who had been at the first were quick to engage and help new participants appreciate the nuances of the Café, especially the ambiguity of questions. In my view, communities need to think about an ongoing conversation in which the community becomes skilled at working together in this way and it becomes a practice that is conserved even as members come and go.
- When we seek to involve and engage youth, as we should always, it is important to go to them, to meet them where they are, and then engage. Important for youth to see the value of engaging this way (Café), in contrast to what they might see via the media or have witnessed themselves.
- There is significant interest in several communities about convening important conversations in this manner (based on workshop attendance).

What's next?

From my perspective, I am prepared to continue coaching any Network that would like to host a Café or series of Cafés in their community, and to offer World Café workshops to meet any demand. I understand that more information might be available after January 19.